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13. — *Poems by DAVID GRAY, with Memoirs of his Life.* Boston : Roberts Brothers. 1864. pp. xv., 239.

WE wonder if the plant which our liberal shepherds misname ivy, ever fancies that it is of one substance with the oak by which it climbs, and that the trunk that holds it above the dead level of common earth is its own? There is, at any rate, a class of authors who are the victims of this illusion, and David Gray was one of them. Of a nature essentially weak-stemmed and clambering, he seems to have persuaded himself that, because by clinging to Keats and Wordsworth he could climb to a certain height by them, he was of the same species; that, because he liked them, he was like them. He had the temperament of genius, without those higher qualities which alone make that temperament enduring. One of his Sonnets shows that he was proud of the one thing he had in common with Keats, though that one thing was consumption. This is certainly the sublime of secondariness. In his verses there is not one that is above the neap-tide level of Blair's "Grave," or Grahame's "Sabbath"; the only difference being, that his diction has the trick of this century instead of the last. The one good thing in a Sonnet quoted by his friend Buchanan in proof of his powers is transfused from Shakespeare, and gains nothing in the transfusion. Lord Houghton's Introduction is exquisite alike for the kindness and reserve of its tone, contrasting pleasantly with the rather ambitious "Memoirs" that follow it. The mechanical part of the volume does great credit to the taste of the publishers and the skill of the printers.

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14. — *Forty Years of Pioneer Life. Memoir of JOHN MASON PECK, D.D.,* edited from his Journals and Correspondence by RUFUS BABCOCK. Philadelphia : American Baptist Publication Society. 1864. pp. 360.

To say that a biography will be interesting to persons of the same religious persuasion with the subject of it, is to circumscribe its human interest within very narrow limits. We cannot imagine a Plutarch for Baptists or Unitarians. Dr. Peck's life was very well worth living, but might, we think, have been profitably written in a compass more suitable to the average length of human days. He was a man of an energy and will that would have made themselves felt in any calling, and which he devoted to missionary labors in behalf of his sect in the West. Though he made no great sacrifice in this, we believe that he did a great deal of good, and his life has something of the interest that belongs to those of all self-made men, though we think a line should be

drawn between those who have merely made themselves something and those who have made themselves eminent. Something may be learned from the book of the early social condition of some of the Western States, though not so much as we had hoped. Perhaps Dr. Peck's journals might yield a better harvest than Mr. Babcock has known how to reap from them. At any rate, we have a picturesque glimpse here and there (like that of Judge Tucker with his law-office in the hollow trunk of a buttonwood) that makes us wish for more. We learn incidentally that "bushwhacking" meant originally to pull a boat along by laying hold of the bushes on the shore, and we do not know that the lives of many men teach us more.

16. — *The History of Friedrich the Second, called Frederick the Great.*

By THOMAS CARLYLE. In 4 vols. Vol. IV. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1864. pp. vi., 510.

WITH the gift of song, Carlyle would have been the greatest of epic poets since Homer. Without it, to modulate and harmonize and bring parts into their proper relation, he is the most amorphous of humorists, the most shining avatar of whim the world has ever seen. Beginning with a hearty contempt for shams, he has come at length to believe in brute force as the only reality, and has as little sense of justice as Thackeray allowed to women. But with all deductions, he remains the profoundest critic and the most dramatic imagination of modern times. Never was there a more striking example of that *ingenium perfervidum* long ago said to be characteristic of his countrymen. His is one of the natures, rare in these latter centuries, capable of rising to a white heat; but once fairly kindled, he is like a three-decker on fire, and his shotted guns go off, as the glow reaches them, alike dangerous to friend or foe. Though he seems more and more to confound material with moral success, yet there is always something wholesome in his unswerving loyalty to reality, as he understands it. History, in the true sense, he does not and cannot write, for he looks on mankind as a herd without volition, and without moral force; but such vivid pictures of events, such living conceptions of character, we find nowhere else in prose. The figures of most historians seem like dolls stuffed with bran, whose whole substance runs out through any hole that criticism may tear in them, but Carlyle's are so real, that, if you prick them, they bleed. He seems a little wearied, here and there, in his Friedrich, with the multiplicity of detail, and does his filling-in rather shabbily; but he still remains in his own way, like his hero, the Only, and such episodes as that of Voltaire in the present volume would make the fortune of any other writer.